A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES IN THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION WRITING AT JUNIOR SECONDARY LEVEL: A CASE STUDY OF KUWADZANA 1 HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION.

MAY 2017
BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

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PROGRAMME: Post Graduate Diploma in Education

YEAR GRANTED: 2017

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my wife Patience Mugwanhira and our three children, Praise, Pardon and Prosper. I honour and respect them for their unwavering and determined support. This work would not have been successful without them on my side. Their prayers and encouragement have lifted me high to where I am today. May the Almighty God bless them abundantly.
ABSTRACT

This study explores the teaching techniques used in teaching English composition writing skills to Form 1 classes at Kuwadzana 1 High School as to address the problems learners encounter in writing compositions. The purpose of the study was to unveil teaching techniques used and those that can be used to address the problems encountered by learners in writing of English compositions. The researcher used the mixed methods approach that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative to collect data because they usually complement each other in terms of statistical and descriptive data. Descriptive research designs were used in the investigation. Questionnaires, interview guide, observation guides and documents were used as data collection instruments. The population consisted of 5 teachers and 250 pupils to make a total of 255. The sample consisted of 5 teachers and 50 learners who were selected using the random sampling method. There were 5 Form 1 classes with 50 pupils in each class. 10 cards written ‘Yes’ and ‘40’ cards with ‘No’ were put in a hat for pupils to pick in each of the 5 classes. There were only 5 Form 1 teachers at the school and they became part of the sample. Data was presented in tables, pie charts and bar graphs for interpretation and analysis. Problems encountered by learners were on grammar, mother tongue interference and spellings among others. Effective teaching techniques in teaching English composition writing skills identified were drilling, brainstorming, narration, storytelling, dialogue, games, drama, discussion, and mapping among others. The researcher recommended use of a variety of teaching techniques to teach English composition writing skills, provision of resources, staff development courses, rechecking of composition written before submissions by students, instructional supervision, community involvement and use of information communication technologies to enhance good writing skills in composition writing.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to my academic supervisor Mr Muvindi for tireless efforts in giving me directions on how this project was to be carried out. His determination, encouragement and guidance were the driving forces behind the successful compilation of this research project.

I also want to express my sincere gratitude to the Head of Department of English at Kuwadzana 1 High School and all the other staff members for their support throughout the term. My profound gratitude also goes to the Form 1 Grey and Form 1 Violet pupils at Kuwadzana 1 High School for their cooperation in this study. Up and above all, the researcher renders everything to the Almighty for his everlasting love, grace, wisdom, and revelations in all the project’s undertakings.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Chapter lays a foundation of the study by way of articulating the background of the study, stipulating the objectives of the study, identifying the significance of the research study, stating the problem, the research question and explaining on the limitations and delimitations of the research study.

1.1 Background of the study

After three months of teaching junior secondary classes at Kuwadzana 1 High School, the researcher observed that learners faced problems in writing English compositions. There are critics leveled against the techniques being used in the teaching of English composition writing skills at junior secondary level. The Zimbabwe Junior Secondary syllabus aims at improving learners’ writing, reading, listening and speaking skills. The syllabus is aimed at equipping learners with linguistic, empowering learners with creative prowess, promoting an awareness of the usefulness of the English language as a medium of national and internal communication. Through observation and documentary evidence, the researcher noted pupils’ performance deficiencies in the writing of English composition writing.

Learners presented compositions with loose content. Pupils lacked originality on the given topic. Their essays also lacked proper sequence and organized flow of ideas. Furthermore, paragraphs were badly formulated, with ideas haphazardly arranged. It was common to find different ideas placed in one paragraph without developers at all. Compositions lacked properly defined structure without introductions, body and conclusions. Pupils’ composition lacked variety in their expression of ideas. Sentences were long and meaningless. Sentences included wrongly used linking words. Complex sentences which were correct lacked variety. Most junior level pupils did not know the various types of compositions. These are, descriptive, argumentative, narrative and expository.

English language for Form 1 classes proved to pose problems for learners as it is a second language. Learners in these classes most often used their mother tongue at home and
were compelled to use English at school. About 95% of learners of Form classes came from nearby high density suburbs such as Dzivarasekwa, Corobrough, White Cliff and Dawnvil. Most of the primary schools in these high density areas use Shona language for communication. Although school regulations make it mandatory for pupils to speak in English, they continued to use Shona. They think in Shona and then try to write in English. These learners found it difficult to use English language in both oral and written assignments due to lack of practice. This was as a result of direct translation from Shona to English.

It was against this background that the researcher embarked on investigating into the teaching techniques applied by facilitators in teaching of compositions to Form 1 classes at Kuwadzana 1 High School. The researcher investigated how teachers could address these challenges. The researcher critically analysed the teaching techniques being used by teachers and evaluated the learners’ response. On the other side, the researcher would experiment with the techniques that improve learners’ performance. **ZIMSEC Principal Marking Supervisors Report: 2014** stated that despite the efforts by the government of Zimbabwe and non-governmental stakeholders in providing qualified instructors, learning resources and financial aid, pupils’ academic performance in writing essay remains low.

Rwambiwa (2007) supported that teaching should address cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. The researcher was aimed at improving the writing skills in composition writing using suitable teaching techniques. Langan (2002: 11) posited that, “Writing is a skill like driving, typing, cooking and like other skill, it can be learnt.”

**1.2 Statement of the problem**

This study explored the teaching techniques used in teaching of English composition writing skills to Form 1 classes at Kuwadzana 1 High School so as to address the problems learners encountered in the writing of English compositions. This is a perennial challenge for most second language learners.
1.3 Purpose of the study
Based on the statement of the problem stated above, the purpose of this study was to research into the teaching techniques used by teachers in teaching English composition writing to Form 1 classes. The study therefore was to unveil teaching techniques used and those that can be used to address the problems encountered by aforementioned classes in writing of the English compositions. The researcher is to make recommendations that are to help improve pupils’ performance in English composition writing.

1.4 Objectives
The study sought to:

i. Establish English composition teaching techniques used by English teachers.

ii. Identify the problems encountered by Form 1 classes in writing of English compositions.

iii. Identify the challenges of the current English composition teaching techniques.

iv. Identify the teaching techniques that can be applied in solving problems that learners encounter in writing English compositions.

1.5 Research questions
The study was aimed at answering the following questions:

i. What are the English compositions teaching techniques used by English teachers at Kuwadzana 1High School?

ii. What are the problems encountered by learners in writing English compositions.

iii. What are the challenges of the current English composition teaching techniques?

iv. What are the teaching techniques that can be used to solve problems encountered in writing English compositions?

1.6 Significance of the study
The research is important in that it brings awareness among curriculum planners and implementers on the best teaching techniques that can be used. The study will unearth problems encountered by teachers in the teaching and learning of compositions and this will form the basis for further investigation. The findings of this study will help school
authorities and teachers to harmoniously work together after adopting some of the recommendations to improve learners’ writing skills in English compositions.

The investigation will help the teachers to choose and use the best teaching techniques in delivering lessons as to improve pupil’s performance. The researcher hopes to establish the best teaching techniques to Form 1 classes of mixed abilities. The research study will unearth the teachers’ weaknesses inherent in some teaching techniques applied in the teaching and learning of English composition.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and school’s authorities will realize the importance of the provision of resources to improve the teaching and learning of learners. In addition, authorities should plan for staff developmental courses to improve competence. The outcome will also enhance learners’ performance in English composition writing and improve their mid year and end of year results.

The researcher was a student teacher at Kuwadzana 1 High School teaching English to Form 1 and Form 3 classes, hence, the investigation will help the researcher to become a competent English Facilitator after the completion of the Post Graduate Diploma in Education. The research study will also call for the parents to help their children to improve their performance in English composition writing.

1.7 Delimitation

This research study was conducted at one school only which is Kuwadzana 1 High School in Harare. Five classes of mixed ability and of the same age were to be used for the research study. The research study was to be carried out in 12 weeks. The population was 255 which consisted of 250 pupils and 5 teachers. The research would incorporate facilitators and learners only. The sample consisted of 5 teachers and 50 pupils who were randomly selected. The study was restricted to Kuwadzana 1 high School as the researcher was a student teacher the period under study. Interviews, observations, documentary analysis and questionnaires were carried at the school in time with minimum costs. Respondents were readily available and this made the collection of data easier.
1.8 Limitations

Miller (1983:40) emphasized that ‘research goes with so many constraints than a researcher might fail to meet.’ The researcher has to put more in the research study to meet the objectives set. Constraints included time and money. Money was needed for purchasing of stationery, printing, visits to see the supervisor and airtime for communication with the supervisor. Time was limited as the researcher would be conducting lessons to other classes, visit the library and the supervisor and to research on internet after work. The researcher was to work on the project unusual hours. In addition, the researcher was to forego other social commitments in order to come up with a comprehensive study.

1.9 Definition of terms

The following terms will recur in this study hence the need to define them:

Composition: is the art of linking a number of parts or elements in one continuous piece of writing.

Guided Composition: is a composition in which the teacher provides the situation and helps the learner to answer given question.

Controlled Composition: is to influence the writing of the composition.

Free Composition: is one in which the title is given and the rest is done by the pupil.

Effective: successful in producing a desired or intended result:

Teaching: the activities of educating or instructing or activities that impart knowledge or skill to learners.

Techniques: a way of carrying out a particular task or way one use to achieve something.

Teaching technique: adaptations that teachers use to instruct a diverse group of learners, with diverse learning needs.

Effective teaching techniques: are ways teachers use to impart knowledge and skills as to achieve desired result.
**Approach:** is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language learning and teaching.

**Method:** is a process by which a task is completed or a way of doing something.

**Improving:** is a process of making something better after working on weaknesses identified.

**Second language:** is the language one speaks or learns in addition to mother tongue.

**Junior Secondary Learners:** Form 1 and Form 2 classes.

**Mother tongue:** language acquired by a person from birth.

**Test:** these are questions given to pupils on covered concepts.

**1.10 Organisation of the study**

The researcher used the mixed methods approach, which incorporates qualitative and quantitative research techniques because they usually complement each other in terms of statistical and descriptive data. Creswell (2005) defined mixed method research as, “a procedure for collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely.”

**1.11 Summary**

This chapter dealt with the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, hypothesis, assumptions, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, delimitations and definition of key terms. This gave a firm foundation to the study as it established the key pillars of research. The next chapter is to focus on literature review.
CHAPTER 11 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter shall cover views of different authorities to the research study by reviewing literature in the writing of free, controlled and guided compositions, teaching techniques, problems encountered by learners in writing English compositions as a second language, challenges faced by learners in writing English compositions, implications to the facilitator, interactive methodology and use of teaching aids. Patsika and Chitura (2004) suggest that literature review is an important element of scientific research that assists in clarifying the topic and objectives of the study.

2.1 Area of concern: a gap

The researcher wants to find out the teaching techniques used by teachers and performance deficiencies encountered by learners in the teaching of composition writing to Form 1 classes at Kuwadzana 1 High. When the gap has been identified, the researcher will then identify teaching techniques that can be used to fill the gap. Literature review helps to reveal or expose a knowledge gap which this study attempts to fill.

2.2 Free Compositions

Broughton et al(1980) state that free composition usually means a composition in which only the heading is given and the learner will do much of the work in writing the composition. This is a traditional teaching technique used by teachers on delivery of lessons. Learners can be asked to write a narrative composition entitled “A frightful dream”. In this case, the writer is to write a story of his or her own choice. Teachers will mark and put comments on errors made by the learners. It is the concern of this study to establish whether this traditional teaching strategy still obtains in the modern school, typified by Kuwadzana 1 High, and if so, with what results.
On teaching free compositions, teachers use teaching techniques such as brainstorming, group discussions use of cartoons and pictures among others. The teacher should pose a problem and then have a class discussion. Rains (1978) suggest that teachers should give learners the chance to write rough drafts. This will give the teacher enough time to correct errors before marking.

Niville (1988) and Bright (1970) opine that teachers can use stories in the teaching of free compositions. Learners in both classes are then asked to write a composition from the story told or read. This will help pupils to be more creative and imaginative and improve their vocabulary, writing styles, introduction, body and conclusion. Learners should analyze and interpret pictures and cartoons to come up with good stories.

Advertisements can be used in the teaching and learning of free compositions. In groups, pupils are to identify features and describe adverts. After group discussion, group representatives are to give feedback and corrections are made before individual assignment.

Raines (1978) posit that teachers can use letters in the teaching and learning of free compositions. After class discussion pupils are then given individual assignment.

After marking, the teacher put a comment and this is usually not discussed with the leaner. There are great chances by learners of making the same mistakes when they are not engaged on one on one situation for remedial action. This view is supported by Johnston (1987: 77) who states that, “There are students in most classes who have never got into the habit of considering the teacher’s comments when they write next. For them, the comments are only justification of the mark or given for that piece of work.” Free compositions have disadvantages in learners as they turn to resort to the lengthy and boring statements.

### 2.3 Controlled Composition

Broughton et al (1980), state that, “a controlled composition is one in which for example picture prompts, or memory of a model presented by the teacher, leads to the students reproducing more or less the same final product as each other.” Controlled composition
teaches accurate language. Feinberg (1989) says visual presentation of information aids the reader and contributes to the message of the document.

The writer suggests that teachers can give pupils a paragraph with gaps which they are supposed to fill. Learners are to read, analyse and understand the passage before answering the question. The teacher may use substitution tables, where learners are provided with alternatives which although similar, are not interchangeable.

2.4 Guided Composition

Ellis and Tomlinson (1978) are of the opinion that guided composition types include passage with blanks, substitution, tables, joining sentences together using questions, using outlines, a group of words, pictorial composition, choosing a correct phrase or word. Broughton et al (1980) suggests that guided composition is one in which the teacher provides the situation and assist learners to prepare written work, either through written or oral. It is important for the teacher to do a remedial exercise with learners who fail composition exercises given. After the remedial work, the learner can now write free composition being guided in mind by what has been discussed and corrected.

2.5 Using Effective Teaching Techniques

Having discussed the controlled, guided and free types of compositions, the researcher is to talk about effective teaching techniques that teachers may use to improve pupils’ performance in composition writing.

Littlewood (1981) asserts that communicative approach or communicative language teaching pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. It is the best known current approach to language teaching. Pupils learn through teaching techniques drawn from a variety of methods or approaches according to their different needs. Littlewood (1981) asserts that communicative approach is a learner centered approach and it provides the learner the opportunities in grammatical competence and social skills to satisfy his or her daily needs. Littlewood (1981) posits that communicative approach involve use of teaching techniques such as group and pair work, role play, simulation, information gap exercises, drills, games and peer editing among others.
Edward Anthony (1965) described teaching technique as the level at which classroom procedures are described. Teaching technique is a way of carrying out a particular task or way one use to achieve something.

Family Planning Fundamentals Copyright 2000, California Family Health Council opined that there are various teaching techniques that facilitate learner involvement. The writer identified the following five categories of teaching techniques which are:

a. Asking questions
b. Use of a variety of teaching methods
c. Encourage learners to participate and practice skills
d. Use of different teaching materials
e. Speaking in ways that learners understand.

The aforementioned teaching techniques involve learners in the learning process and this helps them to remember and use the information they learnt. Pupils learn in different ways. Some need to touch and feel something before they can fully learn it.

Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52) identified the following as teaching techniques, mime, dance, songs, jokes and plays. These teaching techniques get the pupils stimulated, relaxed, motivated and attentive. In addition, learners will be engaged and be ready for the lesson. Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52) posit that focusing on lesson topic is a teaching technique. The teacher directs attention to the topic by verbal or non-verbal evocation of the context relevant to the lesson by questioning or miming or picture presentation, possibly by tape recording of situations and people.

Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52) argues that the structuring of a lesson or class activities including disciplinary action, organization of class furniture and seating, general procedures for class interaction and performance, structure and purpose of lessons are teaching techniques. The writer suggests that chosen pupils or the teacher can illustrate the procedures to be applied in the lesson. In addition, reading of listening passage is done for passive reception. Therefore learners in Form 1 classes are to be allowed to read aloud and direct from a given text.
Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52) identified the following as effective teaching techniques in English composition writing:

1. **Checking**: Teacher either circulating or guiding the correction of pupils’ work, providing feedback as an activity rather than within another activity.
2. **Question-answer display**: Activity involving prompting of learners’ responses by means of display questions.
3. **Drill**: Typical language activity involving fixed patterns of teacher prompting and learner responding, usually with repetition, substitution, and other mechanical alterations.
4. **Translation**: Pupil or teacher provision of L1 or L2 translation of given text.
5. **Dictation**: Pupils writing down orally presented text.
6. **Copying**: Pupils writing down text presented visually.
7. **Identification**: Pupils picking out and producing/labeling or otherwise identifying a specific target form, function, definition, or other lesson-related item.
8. **Recognition**: Pupils identifying forms, that is, checking off items, drawing symbols and rearranging pictures without verbal responses.
9. **Review**: Facilitator led review of previous week, month or other period as a formal summary and type of test of pupil recall performance.
10. **Testing**: Formal testing procedures to evaluate learner progress.
11. **Meaningful drill**: Drill activity involving responses with meaningful choices, as in reference to different information.
12. **Brainstorming**: A form of preparation for the lesson, like setting, which involves free, undirected contributions by the pupils and teacher on a given topic, to generate multiple associations without linking them.
13. **Storytelling**: Not necessarily lesson based. A lengthy presentation of story by the facilitator or learner. May be used to maintain attention, motivate, or as lengthy practice.
14. **Question-answer, referential**: Activity involving prompting of responses by means of referential questions.
15. **Cued narrative or dialogue:** Student production of narrative or dialogue following cues from miming, cue cards, pictures, or other stimuli related to narrative or dialogue.

16. **Information transfer:** The pupil is expected to transform and reinterpret the language or information.

17. **Information exchange:** Task involving two-way communication as in information gap exercise, when one or both parties (or a larger group) must share information to achieve some goal. Sharing of information is critical for the task.

18. **Wrap up:** Brief facilitator- or learner-produced summary of point and or items that have been practiced or learned.

19. **Narration or Exposition:** Presentation of a story or explanation derived from prior stimuli.

20. **Preparation:** Learners study, silent reading, pair planning and rehearsing, preparing for later activity. Usually a pupil-directed or -oriented project.

21. **Role play:** Relatively free acting out of specified roles and functions.

22. **Games:** Various kinds of language game activity like board and dice games making words.

23. **Report:** Report of learner prepared exposition on books, experiences, project work, without immediate stimulus, and elaborated on according to pupil interests.

24. **Problem solving:** Activity involving specified problem and limitations of means to resolve it; requires cooperation on part of participants in small or large group.

25. **Drama:** Planned dramatic rendition of play, skit, story,

26. **Simulation:** Activity involving complex interaction between groups and individuals based on simulation of real-life actions and experiences.

27. **Interview:** A learner is directed to get information from another learner or learners.

28. **Discussion:** Debate or other form of grouped discussion of specified topic, with or without specified sides or positions pre-arranged.

29. **Composition:** As in report (verbal), written development of ideas, story, or other exposition.
30. **A propos:** Conversation or other socially oriented interaction or speech by teacher, learner, or even visitors, on general real-life topics.

Chitumba (2008: 164) has of the opinion that learner centered approach at both primary and secondary school encourages total participation among learners.

Haynes (1998) opines that when teachers want to teach creative writing they have to use a dialogue journal rather than having students write in their own journals. In addition, Form 1 learners should write about their interesting topics and the facilitator reflects what learners have said in correct English. Haynes (1998) has of the opinion that teaching of non-fiction reading and writing help learners to avoid translated writing and promote thinking in English. The author suggested that more time should be spent in the pre-writing stage.

Haynes (1998) posits that a teacher should encourage learners to develop a topic orally with few people and allow them to select their own subjects. The author has of the opinion that teachers should strengthen the link between oral and written by encouraging learners to read the facts from the chart aloud in pairs. Furthermore, the writer urged facilitators to use graphic organizers to introduce the skill of arranging information for writing. Learners are to write from this organizer and sentences are used rather than phrases. Teachers are expected to closely monitor non native speakers. Haynes (1998) postulates that teachers should demonstrate to learners, easy grasping of concepts. Learners in all Form 1 classes are to practice in pairs the writing of introduction, topic sentences and conclusion.

The following are teaching techniques discussed by Haynes (1998); the teacher is required to illustrate and explain a particular teaching point which will later be practiced in an exercise. Teaching points help pupils to produce interesting compositions and writing of good sentences. Learners gain the skills of organizing paragraphs, putting ideas in logical sequence. Haynes (1998) asserted that the teacher must ensure that pupils have understood the key points in the given ideas. In guided composition, learners should be assisted to develop given ideas. Development of ideas can be taught using the group or pair work. According to Ellis and Tomlinson (1978: 214), the method allows children to
make individual drafts which will be discussed by group members. After group work on selecting the best aspects, group representatives then read their findings and formulate a number of questions on problem areas which are later put to the whole class for discussion. After group work, individuals write their guided composition with well developed ideas taking into consideration comments by the teacher. Other teaching techniques that can be used by teachers to develop given ideas to learners according to Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52) are project work, displaying work on the notice board and follow up to the composition lesson. All teaching techniques used above are effective because learners are given opportunity to make drafts before producing the final document, errors are corrected and examples of poor and good organization of ideas are revealed. The teacher writes notes on the chalkboard such as paragraph headings which show the sequence of ideas selected. The chronological order of events and developments of ideas are improved.

The teacher expose learners to a variety of reading materials to enhance pupil’s writing skills. According to Ellis and Tomlinson (1978: 170) reading is aimed at providing a wide exposure to written English in use. This point out the importance of the library in the classroom.

The other teaching technique is that of orally preparing the actual exercise. The teacher should orally go through part of the exercise or the whole of it if the exercise is very difficult before the pupils write. This will help the learners to be well versed of what should be done thereby producing good work. If common errors are noticed in language or organization, learners are stopped. According to Ellis and Tomlinson (1978: 212), the teacher must reteach the particular point causing difficult and guide the pupils in correcting were they have gone wrong. If one person has gone wrong others are allowed to proceed as the individual can be attended to.

According to Ellis and Tomlinson (1978:212), the teacher’s task is to develop suitable techniques for demonstrating and explaining specific teaching and languages points which equips learners with techniques that help them to develop given ideas without changing the meaning.
Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52) postulates that the other teaching technique that can be used is that of the use of plain language in instructions, clarity and conciseness which will help the learners to understand what is supposed to be done.

2.6 Problems of writing English as second language

Olanipeleun (2014) opines that poor results in many subjects may be caused by poor background in English language among secondary school learners. The writer said that the mother tongue, in this case, Shona language influence negatively in the writing of English compositions. Oluwole (2008) echoes the same sentiments by saying that low performance in many subjects may be influenced by poor background in English language at the primary school stage. The survey made by the research clearly shows the influence of Shona language in the writing of English compositions by Form 1 classes at Kuwadzana High 1 School.

Teachers have the responsibility of helping Form 1 classes to write good English compositions. Since learners at Kuwadzana 1 High School are from nearby high density suburbs, most of learners prefer to use Shona when speaking and writing. Patric (2003) suggested that mother tongue influence speaking and writing of English and it is difficult to shake off in spite of years of teaching and learning.

Pupils have problems in translating words from Shona to English. This results in grammatical errors and poor sentence construction. Learners develop their ideas in Shona and then try to translate them into English. The chaotic structure and grammar make the writing difficult to understand this type of writing as it presents challenges for the teachers to edit. One strategy will be to identify the verb tenses and correct them. Byrne (1979: 114) asserted that it is difficult for children to acquire the writing skill and this affects their performance and reduces interest.

Neomi (2008) suggested that English language learners use patterns of speech production which are characteristics of Shona language. Most pupils at Kuwadzana 1 High School use Shona so often and are compelled to use English language when learning.
Learners work in groups and this improves their speaking and writing skills. Salam (2002) supports that the mother tongue dominates the learning of the second language.

According to Byrne (1997), there is need to help teachers systematically when writing compositions. The author suggests that composition writing is a complex activity that requires the teacher and learner to work together.

According to Megregor (1971: 96), in many Secondary schools in Africa, the level of the reading and writing skills is very low. The writer says learners are encouraged not to write freely before they have mastered English language as there are great chances of making errors in the process of writing.

On the other note, Ellis (1985: 29) suggests that the mother tongue is an important determinant of second language acquisition though not the only and most important. Ellis (1985: 29) asserts that the influence of mother tongue is likely to be evident in second language phonology and pragmatics where difficulties can be easily predicted.

Interestingly, Beinstein (1977) argues that learners have more to do with his social background which might lead either a restricted or an elaborated code than the influence of the mother tongue. The author opines that difficulties are common in all languages regardless of the learners’ mother tongue.

This study will therefore attempt to establish whether the pupils’ failure to write meaningful compositions is caused by poor mother tongue mastery as Ellis (1985) proposes or as a result of their poor social background as articulated by Beinstein (1977).

Learners make common errors in the use of vowels with words like ‘sit’ and ‘seat’ and ‘sheep’ and ‘ship’. Form I Grey learners have challenges in writing correct spellings in English with words like ‘address’, ‘bicycle’ and ‘committee’, among others.

Similary, Muvindi (2013) observes that at phonological level, a Shona learner studying English as her second language may have problems with the /l/ consonant sound. He said that words like ‘parallel, with a number of /l/ sounds is likely to be pronounced as ‘pararrel’. This is mainly because the /l/ sound is absent from the Shona sound system.
Muvindi (2013) asserts that in English’s’ is added to many nouns to achieve plurality. Shona learner who has Shona as her first language or mother tongue who is used to prefixing her nouns to achieve plurality will have problems when changing words from the singular to plural in English. The author gave an example of a noun ‘book’ which changes to ‘sbook’ when a Shona learner changes singular to plural which is wrong in English. The correct plural in English for ‘book’ is ‘books’. In Shona ‘bhuku’ becomes ‘mabhuku’ in plural and not ‘bhukuma’. James (1980: 183) posits that some prediction of errors always result as false. The writer opines that even learners when instructed what to do, that is adding of ‘s’ at the end of the word, to achieve plurality, a learner can then add ‘s’ to uncountable nouns like ‘urine’ to become ‘urines’, advice to become advices.

However, James (in Richards, 1974:84) notes that interference from L1 is not the source of errors in the L2 learning. Dualay and Burt carried out a research in which they find 85% of the errors to be developmental, 12% unique and only 3% interference. They concluded that children do not organize an L2 on the basis of transfer or comparison with their L1, but they rely on their ability to construct the L2 as an independent in much the same way as in L1 acquisition. They suggest the cause of difficulty learners may encounter as the lack of talent. James (in Winter, 1984:313) says that ignorance is the real cause of the error. Given these controversies, this study is out to establish which one is applicable to the pupils at Kuwadzana 1 High School. Finally, Muvindi (2013) observed that learners repeat the same words and phrases as they have limited vocabulary.

2.7 Problems faced by learners in writing English compositions

Dawson (2006) opines that, good English essays have correct spellings, punctuation and properly arranged sentences with recommended word division. Learners have a wide range of difficulties in English composition writing. These include, paragraphing, punctuation, mother tongue interference, grammar, spellings among other challenges. The Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) Report 2011 observed that students manifest a range of problems. In most cases, students present essays with loose content. Essays lack originality basing on the given topic. Their essays also lack proper sequence and organized flow of ideas. In addition, paragraphs are badly formulated, with ideas haphazardly arranged. It is common to find different ideas placed
in one paragraph, devoid of developers at all. Essays lack properly defined structure, devoid of introductions, body and conclusions. Dawson (2009) posits that introduction should be a summary of ideas and be very good. According to Dawson (2009), opening sentences should capture the interest of the reader and have the curiosity to read on. Therefore compositions should have the introduction, body and the conclusion as eluded by Dawson (2009).

Hesse (2010) also stated that essays lack variety in their expressing of ideas. Sentences are long and meaningless. Sentences include wrongly used conjunctions. The complex sentences which are correct lack variety. Students show lack of understanding of the difference between fragments and short sentences. They confuse the two thereby messing essay with meaningful fragments. Dawson (2008) observed that most pupils do not know the various types of essays. These are, descriptive, argumentative, narrative and expository. Chinodya (2009) states that, good composition is composed of three major parts which are the introduction, body and conclusion. Each fact should constitute a new and whole paragraph. Lester et al (2011) posits that facts should be gathered to support both sides of the story. According to Hesse (2010) learners’ compositions lack topic sentences in each paragraph and they fail to write convincing paragraph Hesse (2010) posits that compositions lack concluding statements in each paragraph, which Lynn (2011) termed a terminator.

2.8 Implications to the teacher

Lewis et al (1985: 70) opines that teachers should arouse learners’ interest, structure the content and give practice and feedback. The teacher’s input help to develop a learner who is competent in composition writing. The teacher’s responsibility is to find teaching techniques to use when teaching English composition writing.

Maringe (2000) says that a good teacher uses several methods of instruction during a single lesson. Teachers are to use the best teaching techniques such as, a class discussion, debate, drama, group and pair work to improve teaching techniques.

According to Neomi (2008), the dominance of the traditional teaching techniques or tactics leaves learners being passive in class. Teachers should move away from using the
old teaching techniques which promotes laziness and apply teaching techniques which promote self discovery.

2.9 Interactive methodology

Wickland (1990: 56) has of the opinion that learning should be transformed into pleasurable activities and memorable episodes. This will help pupils to remember what had happened and being creative and imaginative. According to Wickland (1990), interaction is the process involving reciprocal communication of facts, ideas and meaning resulting in mutual relationships. Active participation in oral discussion helps learners to interpret and analyze given task. Coppen (1970: 25) concurs to the same sentiments when he said, “Active participation by the learners helps in creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm with the result that the learner learns almost without being aware of it. It may also lead to self-learning, a very desirable state of affairs.”

Farrant (1980: 39) posits that group work is the best way of interaction as it promotes democracy. Adam (1982:16) asserts that exchange and sharing that happens in people help in understanding what is required of them. Haralambos (1990: 224), pointed out that, “In interaction, it can be therefore be argued that learning is cooperative rather than competitive.” Adams (1982: 155) suggests that learners often understand things better when working as a group and there is the need to share ideas during the first and last stages of writing. According to Haralambos (1990: 224), group work, pair work and class discussion are the best teaching techniques to use during the first phases of writing.

2.10 Use of teaching aids

Coppen (1970) points out that teaching aids also plays an important part in the teaching of English composition writing. Teaching aids encourage learners to make use of the English language effectively. Coppen (1970) asserted that learners can develop stories from pictures and cartoons.

Goldenberg (2008) suggested that the reading of text, magazines, novels, parades and newspapers improves learner’s reading, speaking and writing skills. Teachers are to encourage learners to read as this will improve their language features such as spellings,
syntax, vocabulary and grammar. According to Mansaray (2003), charts, puzzles, memories, internet and related programs are some of the teaching resources which can be used in the teaching of English compositions writing.

2.11 Summary

This Chapter dealt with literature review of the research study. The following topics were covered, Free, Controlled and Guided compositions, Use of effective teaching techniques, Problems of writing English as a second language, Implications to the teacher, Interactive methodology and Use of teaching aids. Literature review will help in the growth of research methodology in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed related literature and revealed what other researchers found around the teaching techniques that teachers use in teaching English compositions and challenges faced by learners in writing English compositions. This helped to show a missing link that this study attempted to erect. This chapter focused on research methodology. Leedy (1980:91) said that, “Methodology is only an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly. More precisely, it analyzed the research design, data collection procedure, data analysis plan, population, sample, data collection instruments, data collection plan and the data presentation and analysis procedures. This chapter explored the relevance of testing, gathering tools on reliability and validity to this research study.

3.1 Research design

Oyedele (2011) defined research design as the plan, structure and strategy on investigation conceived as to obtain answer to research questions. Marshall and Rossman (2006) opined that a research design is a data collection method that is used to gather information in a logical manner to address the problem statement. According to Cohen and Manion (1987), the research design allowed the researcher to interview respondents either orally or in writing. Research design can be viewed as strategies set up by the researcher to address problems under investigation. It also explained how the researcher collected the data. The researcher used the Descriptive survey research design.”

The researcher used mixed methods approach, which incorporated qualitative and quantitative research techniques because they usually complement each other in terms of statistical and descriptive data. Creswell (2005) defined mixed method research as, “a procedure for collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely.” Biken (1992) suggested that qualitative method refers to the data
collected which is rich in description of people and places and is not handled by statistical procedures. Best and Kahn (2006: 79) defined quantitative research as, “research in which data can be analysed in terms of numbers.” Leedy (2010) asserted that mixed research design brings out a well developed, integrated and comprehensive study. These methodologies provided thorough research on pupils’ writing skills in English language composition at Kuwadzana 1 High School.

3.1.1. Descriptive Survey Method

Chikoko and Mhloyi (1999:83) asserted that descriptive method is probably the best method for collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population. The design used interviews which required face to face interaction. McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 602) define a survey research as “the assessment of the current status, opinions, beliefs and attitudes by questionnaires or interviews from a known population. It was a quick way and cheap method to obtain information. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) and Crowther et.al (1994), survey data is used to describe and explain the status of the phenomenon, to trace change and to draw conclusions. The method was easy to design, accessible to population, solicits information, simple to use, allows the researcher to make correct decisions and brought accuracy results. The research design allowed for appropriate collection of data. Collected data provided a description of an individual, group or situation.

The following are the shortcomings of the descriptive survey research

- Chances of respondents on not cooperating are high and this act as a barrier in data collection. It may involve a considerable amount of time, effort, finance and planning to complete the investigations.
- Descriptive surveys required the initial study design to remain unchanged throughout the data collection hence more work on the part of the researcher.

3.2 Data collection procedure

Procedures used by the researcher to collect data were questionnaires, observation, document analysis and interviews. 50 learners and 5 teachers were given questionnaires that were collected after one week. Closed and open questions were used. Document
analysis was done to composition exercise books, progress test and composition test results. Teachers were interviewed and findings recorded. Observations were done during lessons and interviews carried out with teachers. Respondents were guaranteed confidentiality.

3.3 Data analysis plan

5 teachers and 50 learners were given questionnaires to fill. The questionnaire had provisions on possible solutions to rectify challenges raised. After collection of the data, the researcher presented the work in tables, pie chart and the bar graph to determine learners’ performance and progress in chapter 4. Interviews, questionnaires, document analysis and observations were used as data collection instruments.

3.4 Population of the study

Best and Kahn (1993: 13) define population as, “any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that of interest to the research.” Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995), on the other hand, propose that population is the group from which a sample is chosen. The population was 255 which consist of 5 teachers and 250 students.

3.5 Target population

According to Cohen et al (2007), target population is the total collection of all elements or number about which the researcher used to draw conclusions. The researcher included 5 English Form 1 teachers from Kuwadzana 1 High School and 250 Form 1 learners which formed the target population in this study.

3.6 Sample

Leedy (2010) define a sample as a portion of the overall population that one wishes to study. A sample is a smaller group of subject taken from a larger population which represents the whole population. Borg and Gall (1996) defined a sample as “a given number of subjects from a defined population which is representative of it.” The sample used for this research study was 55 respondents which consisted of 50 pupils and 5 teachers. The English Department consisted of 5 teachers who taught junior secondary
level. At the school there were 5 Form 1 classes with 50 pupils in each class. Random sampling technique was used in the selection of a sample from students. Ten cards with “Yes” and the other forty with “No” were put in a hat in each class. Learners who picked “Yes” cards formed the second set of the sample. Ten learners from each of the five classes added to a total of 50 respondents. Leedy (1980) argue that the sample represented a portion of the target population from the research process. The target population in this study was 255. Van Dalen (1991) says 10% to 20% is good representation of a population. In this case the sample was 20% of the population, meaning that it falls within acceptable levels of sufficiency.

3.7 Data collection instruments

Research instruments were tools used by the researcher to gather data or information. In this research study, the researcher used questionnaires, interview, observations and document analysis tools for collecting data.

3.7.1 Questionnaires

Berg and Lune (2010) define a questionnaire as an order of questions which may be employed in a variety of research situations. Closed ended questions provided a simple choice of answers such as a tick and open ended questions allowed the respondents to fully express their answers. Tuckman (1994) point out that questionnaires were used to discover what experiences have taken place and what is occurring at the present time. Tuckman (1994) suggest that the questionnaire had a specific purpose of probing data. The questionnaire sought to find out what teacher’s problems were in English composition writing and the teaching methods used to improve learners’ performance. Open ended questionnaires allowed learners to contribute freely. Questionnaires were given to 5 teachers and 50 learners. Advantages of questionnaires were that it assisted the investigation to deal with far off persons and situations, allowed learners to answer questions freely with confidentiality. Questionnaires were pre-tested on a small group of population to test if they were clear questions. Saunders et al (2010) argue that the major advantage of using the questionnaire is that it can be administered to many people at the same time. Questionnaires were hand delivered to respondents and collected later.
Questionnaires were cheap; saved time and facilitated obtainment of honest responses. However by using questionnaires, respondents may give information unfamiliar with them. Furthermore questionnaires only work with literate respondents and there were low chances of returns.

3.7.2 Observations

Robson (1993: 190) opines that, “there are two approaches of observational methods, the participation observation and the structured observation.” Mareeet. al (2007) posited that observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. The researcher attended lessons and observed the teacher delivering lessons on English composition writing. The researcher recorded activities as they happened in the classroom like teaching methods, teaching aids and the level of participation. According to Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995), the greatest advantage of observation is the presence of an observing thinking made by the researcher at the scene of action, thus interacting with reality. The researcher did not take part in the lesson delivery that he attended to Form 1 classes. This is the structured observation approach which is different from the participatory observation approach.

The researcher recorded perceptions of individual participants as they interact. Observation enabled the researcher to obtain people’s perception of reality in their actions and expressed as feelings, thoughts and beliefs. The disadvantage of Observation method was that it was more time consuming than other methods of data collection. Behavior of pupils and teachers was noted. Problems and different situations were recorded during lesson observations.

3.7.3 Interviews

According to Chikoko and Mhloyi (1975:73), interview is define as “the face to face administration of the questionnaire.” Face to face interviews were used to clarify some issues which could not be clarified in the questionnaires responses. Interviews were used as a form of triangulation to cross validate the data obtained through the use of questionnaires. Interviews were conducted to five teachers. Respondents were assured of
their confidentiality. Tuckman (1994) posit that, “interviews were used to discover what experiences have taken place there, what a person knows and thinks.” The researcher recorded the information during the interview session. Advantages of using interviews were that the researcher was assured of a response and one would further probe and get information than one anticipated. Disadvantages of using interviews were that it lacked anonymity and the interviewee might tell the researcher what he or she thinks. In addition, the respondent may forget important information or may be embarrassed to tell the truth. Interviews were costly and time consuming.

Open ended interview were used as they were flexible and allowed the interviews to probe and ask for more questions and depth or clear up any misunderstanding.

3.7.4 Document analysis

Giddens (2001) observes that document analysis is a means of using printed materials from archives or elsewhere as a source of information. Document analysis involves researching using lots of written materials.

The researcher observed pupil’s composition exercise books and written work, analyzing the errors which were usually made by pupils when writing. Record books such as Progress test and Remedial record were also observed. A composition test was also given. Oyedele (2011) assert that document analysis guarantees faith in results. The results from the composition exercise books, progressive record book and composition test gave a true picture of what happened.

Advantages of using document analysis:

a) Data is easily accessed and is readily available
b) The data covers a long period of time, making content analysis very useful for studying trends
c) The document can be checked and rechecked for reliability
d) Document analysis can be used to study the large society to solve macro problems.
Disadvantages of Document analysis:

a) Documents may not have been written for the same purposes of the research thereby making it biased.

b) The document did not give clear explanation why pupils fail to score above the average mark.

3.8 Pilot study

Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995: 77) alluded to the fact that it is vital to, “find out whether the instruments used pass the test of validity.” The pilot study was done to check if the instrument being used was effective. Twenty five respondents were selected for pilot study. Five learners were randomly selected from each of the five classes. Five cards were written “Yes” and 35 cards were written “No”. Same questions were given to same respondents to test learner’s reliability. This was done to make improvements to the questionnaire. Chivore (1994) listed several aims of a pilot study which are testing instruments, data collection and analysis techniques and establishing trends which might have some bearings on the final study.

3.9 Data collection plan

The researcher made regular visits to all Form 1 classes under the research study. The researcher explained the purpose of the research study to the Head of the school. The researcher took time to remind respondents to observe due dates for completion of given assignments. The researcher took time to advice respondents to observe due dates for completion of assignments given. The researcher also encouraged respondents to willingly contribute as to help the researcher in the investigation. Questionnaires were coded for easy identification and names of respondents kept as secret. Questionnaires were given to respondents by hand on agreed dates. Questionnaires given to respondents were collected by the researcher after one week.

3.10 Data presentation and analysis procedures

Data collected was presented on tables, pie charts and bar graphs and this enabled easy interpretation. Data presented in tables was expressed in percentage for easy analysis.
3.11 Summary

This chapter was focused on the research design, data collection procedure, data analysis plan, population, sample, data collection instruments, pilot study, data collection plan and the data presentation and analysis procedures. The next chapter presents data presentation, interpretation and analysis.
CHAPTER 1 \textbf{DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS}

4. O \textbf{Introduction}

The previous chapter focused on research methodology. This chapter focuses on data presentation, interpretation and data analysis. Data presentation techniques such as tables, charts and graphs were used to organize the data and derive its meaning. The data was presented in two parts that is the respondent’s demographic data and the second part focused at data relating to objectives of the research study.

4.1 \textbf{Learners: Data collected using the Questionnaires and Documentary analysis}

Data on the background of respondents, that is, age and gender were tabulated as shown on Table 4.1. There were 50 respondents.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Item & Age in years & Females & Males & Respondents \\
\hline
Form 1 classes & 11 – 14 & 30 & 20 & 50 \\
Total & & 60 & 40 & 100 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Pupils by sex and age.}
\end{table}

Question 1: What is your gender?

Analysis of Table 4.1

Table 4.1 above shows that 60\% of the respondents were female and 40\% were males. There is gender bias as there are more females than males. Therefore responses are not well represented.

Question 2: What is your age?

Analysis of Table 4.1

100\% of respondents were aged 12 to 14 years. This early adolescent age is characterized by activity and adventure as asserted by Quinney (1979). He goes on to observe that
young people in this age group are more experimental in nature. Therefore their contribution was truly representative of junior certificate level that this study focused on.

Table 4.2 Teacher’s attendance to English lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As per time table</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never attends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3: How often does your teacher attends lessons?

Analysis of Table 4.2

Table 4.2 above indicates that 100% of respondents showed that teachers attended lessons. Therefore poor performance in English composition by learners could not be as a result of absenteeism by teachers hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.

Table 4.3 Pupils’ attitude towards assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delighted</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4. How do you feel if your teacher does not give you an exercise?

Analysis of Table 4.3

80% were happy, 6% disappointed and 14% were undecided. Pupils’ attitude towards assignments is negative hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.
Table 4.4 Frequency of English composition writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once after two weeks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5: How many times are you given English composition exercise?

Analysis of Table 4.4
All learners said they were given English composition exercise every week. The data showed that the teacher is following the syllabus and it is not a cause for low performance hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.

Figure 4.1 Learners’ ability to expand given points in guided writing.

Question 6: Are you able to expand given points in a guided composition?
Analysis of Fig 4.1
87% of learners failed to expand points and 13% managed to expand points. Poor performance can be as a result of failure to expand points hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.

Question 7: Identify components of a composition body structure.

Figure 4.2  Body structure of a composition

![Pie chart showing components of a composition body structure: Paragraphs 26%, Key sentences 36%, Linking of ideas 38%]

Analysis Figure 4.2
Fig 4.2 shows data collected from questionnaires and documentary analysis which proved that learners did not know the composition body structure. The researcher checked learners’ composition exercise books and Progress Record book. Body of the composition is made up of different paragraphs. Fig 4.2 shows that 26% of pupils constructed poor paragraphs, 36% failed to write topic sentences and other key sentences and 38% failed to link ideas in a logical sequence. Composition exercise books showed that learners constructed poor paragraphs and this affected the quality of their compositions. Paragraphs were not arranged in a chronological and logical sequence. Each point or fact did not have a paragraph of its own. Each fact should constitute a new and whole paragraph and this was missing in pupils’ composition exercise books. Lester
et al (2011) posited that facts should be gathered to support both sides of the story. There were no topic sentences in each paragraph. Respondents failed to write convincing paragraphs. There were no concluding statements in each paragraph, which Lynn (2011) termed a terminator. Views or ideas were not linking. Kuwadzana 1 High has a good library and the above discussion showed lack of a reading culture hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques applied by teachers.

Question 8: Identify the number of composition parts.

Table 4.5 Composition parts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition parts</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Table 4.5

Table 4.5 shows findings from questionnaires and documentary analysis. The above table shows that 80% of the respondents failed to identify the number of parts that make up a composition. Chinodya (2009) asserted that, good composition is composed of three major parts which are the introduction, body and conclusion. The implication of this on composition writing is that 80% lacked proper understanding of the structure of compositions hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.

4.2 Learners: Data collected using Documentary analysis and Observation

Pupil’s composition exercise books, Daily lesson Plans, Teacher’s Scheme cum plans, Progress record books, Test record books, Extension record books and Remedial record books.

Question 9 State the function of the introduction.
Table 4.6 Functions of Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Percentages %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States ideas</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops ideas</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarises ideas</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis: Table 4.6
Data in Table 4.6 was collected from documentary analysis where the researcher actually checked pupil’s composition exercise books. Literature review captured major functions of the introduction. This means that respondents need to understand all components of composition which are the introduction, body and conclusion. Data collected showed that 30% of respondents know the role of introduction in English essays. Dawson (2009) posited that introduction should be a summary of ideas and be very good. According to Dawson (2009), opening sentences should capture the interest of the reader and have the curiosity to read on. 70% of respondents do not know the function of introduction as shown by their compositions in composition exercise books hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.

Table 4.7 Types of sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of sentence</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentages %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of above</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis Table 4.7
Data in Table 4.4 was collected from documentary analysis where the researcher actually checked pupil’s composition exercise books. Table 4.7 shows that a big number of the pupils used simple sentences when writing their compositions. On the other side, Composition Exercise Books showed poorly constructed sentences. ZIMSEC Report November 2011 emphasized that most essays written by pupils were characterised by unfinished sentences. Unfinished sentences make compositions dull. 60% of respondents
used simple and unfinished sentence as shown by their compositions in composition exercise books hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers.

Figure 4.3 Problems faced by pupils in English composition writing: From Documentary analysis: Composition exercise books

Analysis Fig 4.3
Data in Figure 4.3 was collected from questionnaires and documentary analysis where the researcher actually observed pupil’s composition exercise books. Table 4.3 above shows that grammar was the major difficult area faced by pupils among others which were paragraphing, punctuation, vocabulary, sentence construction and mother tongue influence. Dawson (2006) opined that, good English essays have correct spellings, punctuation and properly arranged sentences with recommended word division. Pupil individual intelligence and knowledge, teaching techniques used by teachers cannot be dismissed without investigation. Pupils lacked proper and appropriate use of correct tenses derived from the topic. Learners have confusion in the use of past tenses and future
tenses. ZIMSEC report November 2011, stated that when respondents write a composition, decision should be made on what tenses to use. Pupil’s composition exercise books showed that respondents did not write legible work. Compositions were very short and difficult to read. Ross and Roe (2007) articulates that teachers need to make writing so necessary and so ordinary. Research findings from the study identified problems encountered by learners and offered possible solutions to correct them. The aforementioned difficulties in writing English composition can be corrected if the interrogation is carried out to find out what can be the causes of these problems and further investigate on the effective teaching techniques that can be used by teachers. Harris et al (2013) suggests that teachers have the ability to select how to teach pupils on the use of variety of words, punctuation and word division.

4.3 Teachers: Data collected from using Questionnaires and Interviews

Five questionnaires were distributed to five Form 1 English teachers. Questionnaires aim at identifying the teaching techniques teachers can use, identifying learners’ problems as seen by the teacher and how identified challenges can be addressed. Five Form 1 class teachers’ experiences were noted as shown on Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher for class</th>
<th>Year of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 1: State the number of years you have been teaching Form 1 classes?
Analysis of Table 4.8
All teachers are experienced in teaching Form 1 classes. All teachers are experienced hence the need to interrogate the teaching techniques used by teachers. Responses are likely to be authentic since they have seen it all through experience.

Figure 4.4 Professional Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in education</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in education</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of education</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2. Are you trained in teaching English composition to Form 1 classes?

Analysis of Fig 4.4
Three teachers had Diploma in Education which constitutes 60% and two teachers had Bachelor of Education which constitutes 40%. Statistics show that teachers were highly qualified and adequately trained. Therefore poor performance is not caused by teacher’s qualifications hence the need to establish the cause thereof. Teachers are not only qualified to teach but they are also experts in their own rights as participants.

Question 3
Identify the teaching techniques that you know which can be used to teach English composition writing skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher for class</th>
<th>Teaching techniques teachers know for teaching English composition writing skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A                 | Brainstorming, Story telling  
                     Games:-language game activities, crossword puzzle  
                     Discussion, Debate, Project work  
                     Role play:-free acting out of specified roles and functions  
                     Guiding the correction of pupil’s work  
                     Displaying work on the notice board  
                     Follow up to the composition lesson. |
| B                 | Brainstorming, Story-telling, Creative writing competition  
                     Drilling-fixed patterns of teacher prompting and pupils respond [repetition]  
                     Drama:-planned dramatic rendition of play or story,  
                     Simulation:-activity involving complex interaction on simulation of real life situations and experiences. |
| C                 | Brainstorming, Story-telling, Journalistic reporting  
                     Dictation: -pupils write down orally presented text  
                     Copying:-pupils writing down text presented visually  
                     Identification:-pupils picking out and producing or labeling |
| D                 | Review: teacher led review of previous work as formal summary or type of test of pupil recall performance.  
                     Discussion, Writing through literature,  
                     Debate, Chain writing, Computer assisted writing, On line classes, |
| E                 | Testing:-to evaluate student progress  
                     Dialogue:-following cues from miming, pictures, cue cards  
                     Information exchange:-group or pair work  
                     Use of plain language in instructions, clarity and conciseness which will help the learners to understand what is supposed to be done. |
Analysis Table 4.9

The teaching techniques that became out here resonated with the Crookes and Chaudron (1991;52) findings that identified aforementioned teaching techniques in Table 4.9. Therefore one wonders where the challenge is considering that teachers have proved that they are knowledgeable on teaching techniques used to teach English composition writing skills yet pupils continue to fail. Is it mere knowledge without application? This is what the study continues to find out.

4.4 Teachers: Data collected using Observation and Documentary analysis

Figure 4.5 Effective Teaching techniques

Analysis Fig 4.5

Data was collected through Observation and Documentary analysis. The researcher observed lessons conducted by the five Form 1 teachers for three months and recorded
the findings. Each teacher used some of the teaching techniques mentioned in Fig 4.5 in their different classes.

**The following teaching techniques were used by teachers during lessons as observed by the researcher during lesson observations:**

a) **Drama/ Role play**

Learners were put in groups by the teacher and given different situations and roles to act or play. This helped learners to interact and share ideas. Drama helped learners to be very creative and imaginative when writing English compositions. Role play also helped learners to remember events in order of their happenings.

b) **Debate**

Debates were done in all classes visited and all learners were participating showing interest. A debate club was also formed at Kuwadzana 1 High School. Learners met every Wednesday in the afternoon and practice in preparations for competitions scheduled at the end of every month. Rewards were given to those who won the competition and this acted as motivation to learners. Debates improved pupils’ grammar and vocabulary as evidenced by their work in composition exercise books.

c) **Public speaking**

Public speaking club was also formed at the school with the intention of encouraging pupils to be fluent and confident in speaking. Visits made to public speaking practice showed a great improvement in grammar and vocabulary. This helped learners to write correct sentences which were free of grammatical errors. All learners were encouraged to join the club to improve their performance in English composition writing.

d) **Remedial lessons**

Teachers were involved in guiding the correction of pupils’ work.
e) **Brainstorming**

Teachers and learners were involved in problem solving discussion which pupils contributed ideas spontaneously. This helped learners to have a better understanding of the concepts as interaction encouraged better understanding. The teacher also clarified difficult areas for the benefit of all learners.

f) **Drilling**

Teachers were observed repeating ideas frequently so that learners could remember easily what they have learnt. The teacher emphasised on the importance of knowing the introduction, body and the conclusion. Learners were also reminded on punctuation, paragraphing and writing of correct spellings. Drilling helped learners to remember important areas when writing compositions.

g) **Creative writing competitions**

Competition for creative writing was established by teachers and this in a way encouraged learners to work hard and produce good compositions. Visits to classes showed seriousness in practice and this helped learners to understand better.

h) **Games**

The teacher organised learners in groups and then tasked them to find the correct word to fill the gaps in the sentences given and also to work on puzzle in pairs.

i) **Group work/ Pairing**

Learners were given assignments to work in groups or in pairs on composition writing. Pupils were to report back or make presentations on their findings. Class discussions involved pupils’ participation and contributions and corrections by the teacher. There were few corrections made on group composition answer script as they were well written.
j) **Motivation**

Teachers introduced competitions in creative writing, public speaking, drama, impromptu speech and debate. Learners were encouraged to work hard and write good compositions so that they win. Furthermore, pupils improved their grammar, vocabulary, sentence construction, spellings and punctuations. Pupils’ group work composition answer scripts were free of common mistakes and difficulties that individuals make. This development prepared individuals in writing English compositions.

k) **Story-telling**

A lengthy presentation of the story by the teacher and some of the learners were made. As observed by the teacher, teaching techniques were used to maintain attention, motivate and as lengthy practice. This helped learners to be creative and imaginative.

i) **Use of pictures**

Pictures were used as an aid in storytelling by the teachers. This helped pupils to be creative and imaginative.

At the end of every month a composition test was given and recorded. Lesson observations, Daily lesson plans, Schemes of work, Progress Record book and Composition Test Mark Distribution in Table 4.10 showed great improvement in pupils’ performance after the use of various teaching techniques in the teaching of English composition writing. Daily lesson plans showed the teaching technique under the Lesson structure section and Schemes of work showed the teaching technique used under Method and learning experiences section. All teaching techniques shown on Figure 4.5 were used and proved very effective as shown on results on Table 4.10. Use of different teaching techniques results in varied level of writing success. Haynes (1998) opines that by encouraging learners to participate, this help them to master concepts and development. This means the use of appropriate teaching techniques resulted in good, well written, coherent and balanced compositions. Nunan (2006) posited that teachers’ teaching techniques can affect their respondents’ attitude. The 78% pass rate showed application of the teaching techniques in teaching of English composition writing.
Table 4.10 Composition test marks distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark distribution 100%</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52-60</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62-70</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-80</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92-100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis Table 4.10

Table 4.10 shows that there was a great improvement when comparing with data collected from Progress test record and English composition exercise books and observation. 78% of the respondents passed the Composition test. Research findings showed the effectiveness of teaching techniques in English composition writing. Teachers used some of the teaching techniques as evidenced in Figure 4.5. Chinodya (2009) opines group teaching as effective as it makes learning a shared experience.

4.5 Summary

This Chapter covered data presentation, analysis and interpretation of collected data in the previous chapter. The study revealed teaching techniques which were used to improve Form 1 learners’ performance. The next Chapter will focus on the research summary of the major findings, conclusion and recommendations.
5.0 Introduction

This Chapter sums up the results of the research study. It looks at conclusions to be drawn from the findings and recommendations of the research with reference to classroom practice.

5.1 Summary

The purpose of the study was to investigate into the effectiveness of teaching techniques in the teaching of English composition writing skills at junior secondary level at Kuwadzana I High School. The researcher used the descriptive survey design as the main methods in carrying out the study. Questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentary analysis were used as data collecting instruments. Descriptive survey was appropriate in the study as it managed to capture respondents’ views, beliefs and perceptions about the teaching techniques applied in teaching of English composition and solutions to identified problems. The sample for the study was 55 and the population was 255. Graphs, pie charts and tables were used for presentation of data which was analysed to come up with the answer to the research problem. Effective teaching techniques were established as brainstorming, story-telling, role play, simulation, games, debate, creative writing competition, dictation and drama among others. Problems faced by learners in the writing of English composition were on punctuation, grammar, paragraphing, vocabulary, sentence construction and mother tongue influence among others. 78% Pass rate in the Composition Test was evidence of the effectiveness of aforementioned teaching techniques used. Data collected from Documentary analysis and Observation showed a gradual change from the time teachers started to use a variety of teaching techniques to improve pupils’ English composition writing skills to the time when learners wrote the composition test.
5.2 Conclusion

This study explored the teaching techniques used in teaching English composition writing skills to Form 1 classes at Kuwadzana 1 High School so as to address the problems learners encounter in writing of compositions. Pupils learn in different ways. Some need to touch and feel something before they can fully learn it. Various effective teaching techniques that facilitate pupil involvement were discussed at length and these were brainstorming, story-telling, role play, simulation, games, debate, creative writing competition, dictation and drama among others. Problems faced by learners in the writing of English composition were punctuation, grammar, paragraphing, vocabulary, sentence construction and mother tongue influence among others. The aforementioned teaching techniques involved learners in the learning process and this helped them to master concepts, remember and self discovery. Recommendations should be implemented as they are corrective measures to weaknesses identified.

5.3 Recommendations

From the conclusions made based on the responses, the following recommendations were made:

a) School authorities to make effective supervision and lesson observations as to ensure teachers use a variety of teaching techniques in teaching English composition writing skills.

b) The school to carry out in service and staff development programmes to improve teacher’s competence

c) To teachers and schools, the researcher recommends innovation of teaching learning aids, instructional supervision, community involvement and use of information communication technologies to enhance good writing skills in composition writing.

d) Teachers should identify performance deficiencies or gaps that need to be filled with a chosen teaching technique which is effective to address the problem identified.
e) Schools should put measures to ensure standards in writing of English compositions are adhered to.

f) The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and School authorities should motivate teachers by awarding rewards for the best teacher on using various teaching techniques when teaching English composition for learners to improve their composition writing.

g) Introduction of spelling diaries to learners.

h) Teachers should do revision with learners.

i) Teachers should motivate learners by giving prices to best pupils and most improved in English composition writing.

5.4 Further research

This study recommends that further research be conducted on correlation between the recommended teaching techniques and the actual performance of pupils in composition writing using the quantitative approach in order to establish their relationship. The actual scientific test should be done to prove the result. Calculations should be done using statistical tests such as Chi-square or the T-test.
REFERENCES


Crookes and Chaudron (1991:52)


Family Planning Fundamentals Copyright 2000, California Family Health Council


on July 2015

Patrick, J.M (2013). Mother tongue interference on English Language pronunciation of senior primary school pupils in Nigeria: Implication for pedagogy


APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORM 1 ENGLISH TEACHERS

I am a POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION student. I am carrying out an investigation into the techniques of teaching English composition writing at junior secondary level at Kuwadzana 1 High School. Can you please spare a few minutes to answer this questionnaire. You are assured that your responses will be held in strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes. Thank you for your cooperation.

Instructions

Please place a tick [V] where applicable and kindly answer all questions.

1. What is your gender?  Female  Male

2. Your age group
   a) 26 – 30 yrs
   b) 31 – 35 yrs
   c) 36 – 40 yrs
   d) 40- 45 yrs

3. State the number of years you have been teaching Form 1 classes.
   a) 0– 5yrs
   b) 6 – 10yrs
   c) 11 – 15 yrs
   d) 16- 20 yrs

4. Are you trained in teaching English composition writing to Form 1 classes?
   Yes  No

5. Identify teaching method that teachers can use in the learning and teaching of English composition?
   Yes  No
6. Do you use teaching aids when delivering lessons?
   a) Yes        No
   b) If above answer is “Yes”, identify the teaching aids.

7. Does mother tongue influence the writing of English composition?
   Yes        No

8. Do you use English language when delivering lessons? Yes        No

9. What are some of the problems learners face when writing English composition?
   a) _____________________________________________________________

10. Identify possible solutions to problems raised above.
    _______________________________________________________________

11. Identify the teaching methods that can be applied in the teaching and learning of English composition writing at junior secondary.
    _______________________________________________________________

12. Identify the best teaching method basing on your judgment?
    _______________________________________________________________

13. State the worst teaching method basing on your judgment?
    _______________________________________________________________

14. Identify the most used teaching method in the teaching of English composition?
    _______________________________________________________________

15. Why is the most used teaching method used so often than others?
    _______________________________________________________________

16. Identify the teaching method that you prefer to use in the teaching of English composition to junior secondary level?
    _______________________________________________________________

17. State the most effective methods of teaching English composition.
   a) _____________________________________________________________

18. Identify the challenges of the current English composition teaching methods.
   a) _____________________________________________________________
APPENDIXII: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

I am a POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION student. I am carrying out an investigation into the techniques of teaching English composition writing at junior secondary level at Kuwadzana 1 High School. Can you please spare a few minutes to answer this questionnaire. You are assured that your responses will be held in strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Instructions**

Please place a tick \[ \square \] where applicable and kindly answer all questions.

1. What is your gender? Female \[ \square \] Male \[ \square \]

2. Your age group
   a) 10 – 12 yrs \[ \square \]
   b) 12 – 14 yrs \[ \square \]
   c) 14– 16yrs \[ \square \]

3. How often does your teacher attends English composition lessons?

   | As expected | | | Sometimes | | | Never | | |
   | | | | | | | | | | |

4. How do you feel if your English teacher does not give you individual written work on writing English composition?

   | Delighted | | | Disappointed | | | Undecided | | |
   | | | | | | | | | | |

5. Do you like English composition writing?
   Yes \[ \square \] No \[ \square \]
6. How many times per fortnight are you given English composition writing as home work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyday</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once after two weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Can you write correct English sentences?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

8. Can you write correct English sentences?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. Do you benefit from the library?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

10. Do you score a pass mark of 50% and above in English compositions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. a) Do you have challenges in writing of English composition?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

a) If above answer is “Yes”, identify the problems.

__________________________________________________________________

7. Are you aware of the teaching techniques that teachers use in the teaching of English composition?

Yes [ ] No [ ]
a) If “Yes”, State the teaching techniques that you know?

__________________________________________________________________

12. How should learners communicate with their teachers if they have problems?

a) Through the Head boy
b) Through the Head of Department
c) Through the Class monitor
d) Direct to the teacher

12. What do say about your relationship with your teacher?

__________________________________________________________________

14. What are the most used teaching techniques in the teaching of English composition?

__________________________________________________________________

15. Do you understand comments put by the teacher after marking?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. If the above answer is “NO”, what do you suggest the teacher should do?
ATTENTION: MR PHILLIP MUGWANHIRA

REF: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY TO JUNIOR SECONDARY LEVEL AT KUWADZANA 1 HIGH SCHOOL.

Above matter refers.

Your application to conduct the study was approved.
APPENDIX IV

Kuwadzana 1 High School
P.O Box 70
Dzivarasekwa
Harare

09 January 2017

The School Head

REF: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY TO JUNIOR SECONDARY LEVEL AT KUWADZANA 1 HIGH SCHOOL.

I am a student teacher at your school teaching English to junior secondary level. I am currently studying for the Post Graduate Diploma in Education with Bindura University of Science Education.

I am seeking for permission to undertake an investigation on the effective teaching techniques in teaching and learning of English composition writing to junior secondary level at Kuwadzana 1 High School as from the 1st of March to the 30th of April 2017.

Information collected will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.
APPENDIX V: OBSERVATION GUIDE

School: ________________________________________________________________

Class ________________________________

Date ________________________________

Topic ________________________________

Teacher ______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching aids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English usage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress record books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition exercise books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial record book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Question item</th>
<th>Teacher’s response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the problems encountered by Form 1 Grey class in writing of English compositions</td>
<td>1. How teachers deal with poor sentence construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How teachers deal with spelling problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the teaching techniques that can be applied in solving problems that learners encounter in writing English compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the challenges of the current English composition teaching techniques.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the most effective techniques of teaching English composition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of guidance would you give to learners?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>